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STATE FOR EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT - MARCELLA SZYMANSKI AND JACK BOBO

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [TBIO](#) [ETRD](#) [KPAO](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE AGRICULTURAL BIOTECH OUTREACH PROPOSAL

REF: STATE 129940

¶1. Economic Minister-Counselor, Agricultural Minister-Counselor, Public Affairs Minister-Counselor and Science Counselor present this joint request for support from EEB FY 2009 biotech outreach funds for critical public outreach in France. France remains an influential country both in the EU and worldwide, especially in Francophone developing countries.

¶2. During its EU presidency, France positioned itself as a leader in the areas of addressing the global food crisis and climate change. At the same time, it launched a number of initiatives within the Council of Environmental Ministers which, if ultimately adopted, would retard the adoption and trade of genetically-modified products both within Europe and with some of its trading partners. This anti-biotech approach is often inconsistent with France's climate change and international development objectives.

¶3. The proposed program would be designed to encourage France to support the adoption of biotechnology in developing countries as a means for enhancing their food security and their options for addressing climate change. The program would also be designed to encourage acceptance of the environmental benefits of biotechnology by policymakers and consumers in France.

¶4. The proposed program would build upon the visit of Dr. Martina Newell under the 2008 Biotech Outreach Program, as well as the recent biotech travel to the U.S. by Dr. Mark Fellous (head of the former competent authority on biotech). A number of outreach activities are envisaged to follow up on the Fellous visit, which was sponsored by the French America Foundation in partnership with Public Affairs. It would be ideal if a U.S. speaker under the 2009 Biotech Outreach Program could accompany Dr. Fellous, particularly to address biotech applications in the developing world.

¶5. A. Program description: We are requesting a speaker who will highlight the benefits for developing countries of using biotech crops for food production and consumption, and address how GM plants interact with the environment.

¶B. Time Frame: We are requesting a speaker for three days in Paris. If available for a longer period, we could develop other programs outside of Paris. An appropriate time would be the first quarter of ¶2009.

¶C. Purpose of the Program: To counterbalance the recent French negative stance on biotechnology by increasing understanding by policy makers and the public of how genetically-modified crops can help address food shortages in the developing world, including their potential for ameliorating the effects of climate change. The program would draw the connection between France's environmental and climate change goals, and the environmental benefits of biotech.

¶D. Audience: The speakers will give presentations to development organizations (both governmental and Paris-based NGOs), regulators (government representatives and Parliamentarians), think tanks, farm organizations, planting seed associations, the animal feed industry, agri-food industry and students. The program would have a strong

press component to make a public case for the potential role of GMOs in addressing climate change and other environmental issues, and as a tool for helping the developing world increase food production and consumption.

1F. We anticipate the cost of the proposed program to be \$4,000.00.

1G. (U) NAME AND CONTACT OF PROGRAM OFFICER: Sylvie Vacheret, Economic Public Affairs Specialist. Tel. 33-1-4312-2928, cell phone: 33-6-20 35 16 41. E-mail: vacheretsr@state.gov

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